

February 1, 1996 LB 964

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you. Senator Cudaback, to open on LB 964.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Madam President, members, LB 964, it gives an alternative method for special elections. When I first heard about this idea, I was skeptical myself. I said, gee whiz, it invites all kinds of problems, perhaps. I got to reading, the more I heard about it, the more I listened, and the more people that explained to me and the more I heard about we're not actually inventing the wheel here. Sixteen other states do some form of this. And have you heard in the recent elections in Oregon, it was a big success in many ways. I guess one of the primary purposes for LB 964 is the dollars that it will save. Many safeguards in it. It gives the governing boards the options. On special issues it gives the governing boards the option of doing this if they so wish to use this method. The method is simply the ballots will be mailed out by the election commissioner. The election commissioner mails out the ballots to each registered voter. The registered voter then, within those ten or twenty days, that's the variance; the voters then would have a chance to vote. The voter simply mails ballot back to the election commissioner. The election commissioner then counts the ballot along with the canvassing board, and we have the election over with. No more twelve-hour session, no more dollars wasted on...there have been instances where there have been only fifteen, twenty people vote on a special election issue. This is wasting not only their time, it's a waste of our dollars and it's...this is something that goes along with the times. I'm kind of a traditionalist myself, but I guess the will of the people should be met. We should not make the people jump through hoops in order to vote. And this is what some people say that we're doing with the current system. This is a simply an alternative. They do not have to use this method. They do not have to use this method. I will go through the sections of the bill and tell you what the various sections do. Section 2 allows the Secretary of State to adopt rules regarding mail balloting. Section 3, allow special elections to be conducted by mail as provided in the other sections. Section 4, allows mail balloting for a special election under certain criteria. Criteria includes subdivision has 5,000 or fewer residents. That's important to remember here, 5,000 or fewer residents. We're not talking about registered voters here. Some would like to have this read registered voters, some would